

not been able to get documents and other information critical to understanding and therefore evaluating these programs. In other cases the administration has placed burdensome and unwarranted limits on access by Senators and staff.

Vice Chairman Bond and I are making a concerted bipartisan effort to deal with these questions. And we are making headway. One issue that we both raised with Admiral McConnell at his hearing has now been resolved. We also have seen movement, if not complete satisfaction, in other areas. Admiral McConnell's answers convinced me that he will be an ally in this area. It is my view that the intelligence community needs to view Congress as a partner in supporting intelligence activities that protect America and I think he will do that.

I thank all of my colleagues for supporting support the confirmation of Admiral McConnell and I look forward to working with him in his new role as Director of National Intelligence.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now return to legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNIZING REAR ADMIRAL CHARLES HAMILTON

Mr. LOTT. Madam President, I rise today to recognize Rear Admiral Charles "Charlie" S. Hamilton, upon the completion of his current tour of duty as the Program Executive Officer, Ships, PEO Ships. Since assuming the position nearly 4 years ago, Rear Admiral Hamilton has worked with Congress on numerous issues of vital importance to our Navy and our Nation. His successes and accomplishments have been significant and many. Rear Admiral Hamilton has earned my deep respect and that of my colleagues through his exceptional competence, integrity, and innate ability to cut through bureaucracy in order to get the job done. Today, it is my pleasure to recognize some of Rear Admiral Hamilton's many accomplishments, and commend his service to the Navy, the Congress, and our grateful Nation.

Rear Admiral Hamilton was born in Amityville, NY. He entered military service in 1974 as an ensign after receiving a bachelor of science degree in Zoology from Duke University where he was a member of the Navy ROTC program. He continued his education at the Naval Post Graduate School, where

he earned a master of arts degree in national security affairs, and at the National War College, where he earned a master of science degree in national security strategy. He is also a graduate of the Defense Systems Management College, and a designated surface warfare officer and joint specialty officer.

Rear Admiral Hamilton served in a variety of assignments at sea, where he consistently excelled as a leader of the highest caliber. His positions included combat information center officer aboard USS *Hawkins*, DD 873, mission fire control officer aboard USS *Coontz*, DDG 40, and operations officer aboard USS *Callaghan*, DDG 994. In September 1986, he became the executive officer aboard USS *Fox*, CG 33, where his leadership played a key role in the success of Operation Earnest Will, ensuring the safe passage of tankers and merchant vessels during the fiercest days of the Iran-Iraq conflict. In February 1991, he assumed command of USS *O'Brien*, DD 975, where he was hailed by his subordinates and superiors for his extraordinary leadership.

Rear Admiral Hamilton has also excelled in a variety of key staff positions, where he helped define and execute key elements of our national security strategy. These assignments included serving as the arsenal ship program manager; head of the Fleet Introduction and Lifetime Support Directorate, program executive officer for Theater Surface Combatants; two tours with the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations as Anti-Submarine Warfare Program analyst, OP-91, and Head of the AEGIS Destroyer Section, OP-355. He also served in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology as military staff specialist for naval warfare.

On May 15, 2003, Rear Admiral Hamilton assumed command of PEO Ships, then a newly established organization responsible for acquisition and support of the Navy's entire nonnuclear surface fleet, including boats and craft, special mission ships, and foreign military sales. In this capacity, he skillfully planned and executed current and future shipbuilding programs that will carry our surface Navy well into the 21st century.

During his tenure, 16 major surface ships were delivered to the U.S. Navy and 300 boats and craft were delivered to U.S. and foreign navies. To place that in perspective, it is my understanding that Rear Admiral Hamilton successfully shepherded the design and construction of more types of new ships than has ever been accomplished under a single flag officer since the passage of the Naval Act of 1794. These new classes of surface ships included *San Antonio*, LPD 17, *Lewis and Clark*, T-AKE 1, *Makin Island* LHD 8; *Freedom*, LCS 1, and *Zumwalt*, DDG 1000, classes of ships.

In addition, he tirelessly strove to facilitate the realistic consideration of next-generation architectures as well as ship concepts such as maritime

prepositioning force future, MPFF, Mobile Landing Platform, MLP, and joint high speed vessel, JHSV. Rear Admiral Hamilton's extraordinary legacy of service will be clearly reflected not only in the improved warfighting capability of this Nation, but also in the safety, readiness, and quality of life of our sailors and marines.

On the eve of Rear Admiral Hamilton's change of command ceremony, I offer my congratulations to him, his wife Debbie and his children Chip, Mike, and Christina. Rear Admiral Hamilton will be greatly missed, and I know I speak for all my colleagues in expressing our heartfelt appreciation to him. He is a man of extraordinary honor, courage, and commitment, who always shot straight regardless of risk or possible peril. He is a credit to both the Navy and the United States of America. We wish our friend the best of luck in future endeavors, and congratulate him on the successful completion of an unprecedented tour of duty.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. BROWNBACK. Madam President, I regret that on January 24, 30, and 31, I was unable to vote on certain provisions of H.R. 2, the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007. I wish to address these votes, so that the people of the great State of Kansas, who elected me to serve them as Senator, may know my position.

Regarding vote No. 22, the motion to invoke cloture on the Gregg amendment (No. 101), I would have supported Senator GREGG's amendment and would have voted to bring debate to a close. My vote would not have altered the result of this motion.

Regarding vote No. 23, the motion to invoke cloture on H.R. 2, I would not have voted to invoke cloture on H.R. 2. My vote would not have altered the result of this motion.

Regarding vote No. 34, the motion to invoke cloture on the Baucus substitute amendment (No. 100), I would have supported ending the debate on the Baucus substitute amendment. My vote would not have altered the result of this motion.

Regarding vote No. 37, on the motion to table the Kyl amendment (No. 209), I supported Amendment No. 209 from my colleague Senator KYL and would have voted against the tabling motion.

Regarding vote No. 38, I would have supported the motion to waive the Budget Act with respect to the Kyl Amendment (No. 115) to the Baucus substitute amendment (No. 100) to H.R. 2. My vote would not have altered the result of this motion.

Regarding vote No. 39, the motion to invoke cloture on H.R. 2, as amended, I would have supported ending the debate on H.R. 2. My vote would not have altered the result of this motion.

Madam President, I regret that I was unable to vote the afternoon of January 30 on the confirmation of the nomination of both Judge Lisa Godbey

Wood and Judge Philip Gutierrez to be U.S. district judges. In neither case would my vote have altered the outcome of these confirmations; however, I wish to address these confirmations so that the people of the great State of Kansas, who elected me to serve them as U.S. Senator, may know my position.

Regarding vote No. 35, the confirmation vote on the nomination of Lisa Godbey Wood, of Georgia, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Georgia, Executive Calendar No. 6: I support the confirmation of Ms. Godbey Wood.

Regarding vote No. 36, the confirmation vote on the nomination of Philip S. Gutierrez, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California, Executive Calendar No. 7: I support the confirmation of Mr. Gutierrez.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DENNIS MERRELL

• Mr. GRAHAM. Madam President, today I ask the Senate to join me in recognizing Dr. Dennis Merrell on the occasion of his retirement from York Technical College in Rock Hill, SC. Dr. Merrell officially stepped down last week as president of York Tech following over 30 years of service at the vocational college. For the last seventeen of those thirty years, Dr. Merrell led York Tech as the school's president. He leaves York Tech having transformed the college into a powerful source of economic development and manufacturing workforce creation for South Carolina and the country.

After serving 2 years in the military, Dr. Merrell earned a bachelor's degree in business and computer science from Winthrop University and a master's degree in computer science from Virginia Tech. He joined the faculty at York Tech to teach computer technology and programming in 1976 and in time became chair of the Computer Technology Division. Eventually Dr. Merrell was named the college's Vice President of Instruction. He served in that capacity until he was appointed president of the school in 1989 following the death of his predecessor, Dr. Baxter Hood.

To deliver true quality technical education, Dr. Merrell understood that York Tech would need to rely on resources outside of those provided by State and local government. To that end, Dr. Merrell developed a culture of industry partnerships from which the school has tremendously benefited during his tenure. Under Dr. Merrell's leadership, enrollment in the college's continuing education programs nearly doubled. Six buildings including a child development center, library, student services building, continuing education center, institute for manufacturing productivity, and science and technology building were all constructed on

Dr. Merrell's watch. Construction on a new economic development training center is also currently underway—the product of a collaboration with 3D Systems Corporation.

Like the relationship with 3D Systems, Dr. Merrell also championed partnerships with regional construction companies and other manufacturing businesses to address practical job-training issues. In the last year, York Tech has also joined with utility companies and contractors in the Carolinas to help meet the growing need for entry-level line workers in the region. For efforts like these York Tech was recognized as a Bellweather Awards Finalist in 2006 for its unique approach to industry alliances. The United States Department of Education has even acknowledged York Tech for its innovative approach to meeting the local and national workforce needs in the area of manufacturing.

Dr. Merrell even promoted distance learning, namely online instruction, allowing countless students the opportunity to reach educational goals without giving up their jobs. As such the American Association of Community Colleges named York Tech the number one digital-savvy college among the country's largest and urban community colleges.

Dr. Merrell's community service outside of his work at York Tech includes leadership roles at the Rock Hill and York County Economic Development Boards, the Rock Hill Rotary Board, the Charlotte Area Education Consortium Board, and the York County Red Cross Board, among a host of other technical education organizations.

York Tech is sure to miss Dr. Merrell's leadership and vision, but I am confident that the school will build on his impressive legacy. In conclusion, I ask that the Senate join me in wishing Dr. Merrell a healthy and happy retirement.●

IN RECOGNITION OF FLOWERS FOODS

• Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, today I wish to recognize Flowers Foods of Thomasville, GA, which has just been named by *Forbes* magazine as this year's "Best-Managed" publicly traded food company. This honor comes on top of a record fourth quarter and a record year for Flowers Foods.

Flowers Foods has clearly set a standard of excellence for which all of us should strive. Operating out of Thomasville, GA, since 1919, Flowers Foods has a proven record of success and dedication not only to its customers and employees but also to the State of Georgia. I have watched as this company has grown over the years to the point where it now serves almost 40 percent of the U.S. population. I expect its continued success to serve as a shining example to businesses across Georgia and the United States.

I want to commend chief executive officer George E. Deese and all the em-

ployees of Flowers Foods and their families on a job well done.●

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD SHAPIRO

• Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I join my colleagues in saluting Richard H. Shapiro, the executive director of the Congressional Management Foundation. As Rick moves on to new challenges, I want to thank him for his remarkable service to the U.S. Senate.

Rick Shapiro is responsible for bringing 21st century management skills to an institution built on 18th century rules and practices. We still have spittoons in the Senate—yet we also have blackberries.

Rick Shapiro helped us wrestle with issues that our Founding Fathers didn't even dream about. How do you answer thousands of e-mails a week? How do you hire, train, and retain excellent staff? How do you set goals and measure progress—so that promises made can be promises kept? How do you ensure that state and Washington offices communicate, coordinate and cooperate? Whenever I had a question about managing my office, I turned to Rick Shapiro—and my staff did the same.

Under Rick Shapiro's leadership, the Congressional Management Foundation has helped Members to set up their offices, upgrade office systems, and adjust to new ways of connecting with constituents. His book "Setting Course" is a must-read for all new Members of Congress. He was the first to compile and analyze information from individual offices—to enable Senators to learn from the best practices of others.

Rick Shapiro is a part of our Senate family. In fact, he met his wife Trudy Vincent when she was my legislative director. Their daughter Abby has been spotted selling Girl Scout cookies around the Capitol.

Rick Shapiro has made a lasting impact on the U.S. Senate. I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking him for his service. While he is stepping down from the Congressional Management Foundation, I look forward to great things from Rick in the years ahead.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)